

## TESTIMONY BEFORE MICHIGAN HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE REGARDING HBs 6066-6068

Members of the Committee:

My name is Patrick Schuh, State Director for America Votes. Together with our partners we share a common mission to protect every American's right to vote; that is why I sit before you this morning in opposition to House Bills 6066, 6067, and 6068 as a package. While we support efforts that do focus on making our elections more secure, accurate, and accessible—while ensuring that every eligible voter has their say on election day—Photo ID bills like these are unfortunately taking a step backwards because they put up unnecessary obstacles to voting.

In addition to my role of at America Votes, I have worked on elections in every corner of our state from the Western UP to S.E. MI and have witnessed the regular obstacles voters face on Election Day, largely because of our antiquated system. These bills do nothing to address outdated and unreliable computer systems and tabulators, lack of administrative resources, and poll worker training. These are the reasons errors occur on Election Day and voters are disenfranchised while accessing the ballot.

Election Day is our day when we collectively make our voices heard regardless of party; it's our hope that we can work with this committee to focus on legislative items that truly make our elections more secure, accurate, and modern such as the Voter Bills of Rights (HJR PP) introduced by Representatives Driskell and Hoadley. In addition to working to expand opportunities to voting, we must also focus on modernizing and improving our current election system, such as updating antiquated tabulators and a system largely ran on Windows XP. As I believe the purpose of this committee is to ensure the integrity of our elections, these steps offer a higher impact than placing further obstacles in front of voters.

### Why are Photo ID bills an obstacle?

- Many elderly, low-income, and minority Americans are disproportionately affected by these laws, because they struggle to obtain the primary documents required to obtain a valid voter ID. Entrenched socioeconomic disparities of income, education, employment, and housing contribute to this disparity.
- Many elderly, African-American voters who grew up in the Jim Crow South before migrating north lack a birth certificate because their parents were denied admission to hospitals.
- Many senior citizens also have original birth certificates that have ethnic or alternative spellings of names that were later Anglicized or modified. These discrepancies can result in disenfranchisement,
- The burdens on female voters are acute, particularly if their names have changed through marriage or divorce. It is often a struggle to produce a chain of documentary evidence establishing these name changes, particularly for elderly and/or rural women who have never needed a driver's license or state ID card. When documents go missing over the years, administrative and court procedures to obtain delayed birth certificates or amend existing ones can be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming.
- College student voters, our democracy's newest members, are often prevented from using their student IDs.
- Millions of Americans with disabilities do not have a driver's license or state ID and face significant, and in many cases insurmountable, barriers to traveling to Secretary of State offices, as well as applying to all the myriad vital records.

Given the need to update our voting technology, we must also question the costs the state will bear by offering free IDs and birth records so that the Photo ID requirement in HB 6066 might pass Constitutional muster. One must also consider whether expending these resources to implement HB 6066 versus investments in updated technology and vote tabulators that would in fact improve the accuracy and security of our election wouldn't have a higher impact on this committee's charge.

In addition to our larger concerns related to the intention and outcome of these bills, we believe that they have technical challenges that would add further confusion for poll workers and election administrators.

Thank you to members of this committee for hearing our concerns, and opposition, this morning; I hope our next interaction is working together to advance efforts that encourage increased participation in our democratic process.